TELEGRAPH HILL SEMAPHORE

Publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers

Fifty-six August 1975

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

This year your Directors have been reexamining the entire structure of our organization, especially the functions and responsibilities of Standing Committees, as well as various ad hoc Project Committees. The reason for maintaining any Standing Committee is the need for continuity - to maintain surveillance of continuing problem areas and unresolved issues, and to keep on top of recurring situations facing the THD. Particular projects that require our attention and support over only a limited period will be handled by special committees.

The committee system is the catalyst for positive action by the THD. Our By-laws call for concerted efforts "to beautify and improve ...to encourage a friendly association...to perpetuate the historic traditions...to insure constructive participation...and to represent..." These statements of dedication carry no meaning, in my view, unless we have widespread support and participation from the membership. Support and participation begin at the committee level.

Committee members dig into problems, track Governmental activity and examine the political considerations that often taint neighborhood issues. They must keep the Directors informed on current developments and identify whose interests are being served. Finally, every committee member has a role in preparing recommendations for action. It's a filtering process by which critical issues can be exposed and justified or challenged on real merits after the emotional aspects have been rendered off.

Only in this way, I believe, can the Directors effectively execute their full responsibilities. Upon recommendations by the Committees based on careful study and analysis,

(continued on page 2)

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Thursday, September 4th
(See Announcement on Page 4)

THE TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

August 19, 1975

The Honorable Robert H. Mendelsoln, Supervisor
Chairman, Budget and Governmental Efficiency Committee

The Honorable Dorothy von Beroldingen, Supervisor
Chairman, Finance Committee
Room 235, City Hall
San Francisco, California 94102

Dear Supervisors:

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers join other neighborhood organizations in expressing alarm at the magnitude of recent property tax assessments and the inconsistencies in the procedure for determining valuations.

Home owners and landlords in our neighborhood have incurred particularly heavy increases and those who rent will undoubtedly suffer commensurately. It is difficult to identify any uniform pattern due to the heterogeneous character of Telegraph Hill, but many properties have been reassessed three times since 1965. Assessments on some parcels have climbed 400 to 500% on a cumulative basis for land alone, and 300 to 400% including improvements.

According to newspaper reports, moreover, there appears to be a widening discrepancy between residental and commercial property valuations, particularly with respect to downtown office buildings. Also, we find that notices from the Assessor show the combined values of land and improvements. Heretofore, there was a separate calculation for each category. This new format seriously complicates the problem of evaluating the validity of these assessments.

We strongly urge the Board of Supervisors and other concerned agencies to thoroughly investigate the property assessment situation and to take positive corrective steps toward establishing a fair and equitable system. This vital issue affects not only the property owners and tenants on Telegraph Hill, but the future well-being and vitality of the entire city.

On behalf of the Board of Directors

Robert M. Tibbits
President

cc: Joseph E. Tinney, Assessor
Members of The Board of Supervisors
Mayorial Candidates
Coalition of Neighborhood Associations

PRESIDENT'S LETTER
(continued)

the Board can intelligently set priorities and propose action to the membership at large.

I urge you to consider serving on one or more committees. The satisfaction you derive will be the reciprocal of your efforts, but without the assurance that there will be a well-organized follow through, you may feel it's a waste of time. Indeed, the Board must be responsive to committee proposals and brings important neighborhood issues out into the open or the entire organization suffers.

Each committee will be given specific charges of responsibility and reporting. Organizational meetings for each committee will be scheduled, and will be open to any member of THD, not just committee members. A handbook of city governmental agencies, commissions. names, phone numbers. etc. is being prepared to assist in lobbying efforts. In short, we hope to strengthen the THD by improving communications.

Over the long run, of course, we must take responsible positions on a continuing basis if we expect to remain a viable organization and to carry any weight in city affairs. But the first step is up to you, especially new, young members, who can offer fresh approaches and can generate enthusiasm. The old warriors of the THD have carried the battle for too many years.

Bob Tibbits

SAN FRANCISCO
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE TO ALLOCATE $800,000 FOR NEIGHBORHOOD BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS & NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE PROJECTS

The Committee for Neighborhood Bicentennial Celebrations (NBC) has been hard at work. Its most important task will be to distribute 65 neighborhood awards totaling $600,000 for five major types of projects.

The first category, Festivals and Celebrations, will be coordinated among 18 areas of the city. Festivities in The Telegraph Hill, North Beach, Russian Hill & Nob Hill sectors have been set for October 11-17, 1976 as the finale to celebrations that will begin in mid-June 1976.

Other categories eligible for award money include Public Service/Public Information, and Planning/Recycling/Energy Conservation. Of particular importance will be awards for Beautification/Conservation, and Improvement/Preservation of Historic Sites. These last two may also be eligible for Neighborhood Initiated Improvement Projects (NIIP) funds budgeted at $200,000.

NIIP projects may include tree planting and landscaping of public property, street beautification, play and sitting areas, community gardens and art projects. This is a distinctly separate program from NBC's. The Mayor's Office of Community Development in connection with the Department of City Planing will make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for funding particular projects. Several proposals are being prepared by neighborhood groups on Telegraph Hill to qualify for these funds. The deadline for submitting proposals is September 19, 1975. The THD will be faced with the responsibility of coordinating all the proposals in our area. Funds should be made available by the end of October. (next page)

$800,000 - Continued

The NBC projects, it should be noted, may be supplemental to NIIP in the areas of Beautification/Conservation and Improvement/Preservation of Historic Sites, but no funds will be distributed until January 1976.

At the forthcoming General Membership Meeting. Michelle Anderson, Coordinator of NBC will discuss this program in detail.

Editor's Note

The only State funds provided San Francisco for the Twin Bicentennial were assigned to Golden Gate Park. Sacramento officials decided $25,000 would be appropriate for the resoration of the Francis Scott Key monument, but nothing for our City's bicentennial celebration. This type of mentality would have horrified John McLaren, the designer of the park, who deplored statuary so much, he surrounded it with tall shrubbery whenever possible. Had there been any leadership at San Francisco Twin Bicentennial, Inc., one might speculate, the City would have obtained more funds.

THE Rusty Scupper

475 FRANCISCO – SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. (415) 986-1180

Steaks Prime Rib Fish

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS: CITIZEN SLUM PREVENTION

"Almost every night - some place in San Francisco - a neighborhood organization is meeting. Sometimes its projects might seem mudane, even dull: a trash can is needed near a school, a crosswalk hasn't been repainted, or an intersection needs a stop sign. A zoning violation disturbs some neighbors, and the City says it's aware of the situation, but "nobody's complained yet". So letters are written, phone calls are made, and action is sought.

Taken together, these activities properly initiated by a neighborhood, could mean the difference in its existence as a healthy area attractive to residents, or one which is viewed as slipping downhill.

Through their individual and collective efforts, San Francisco's neighborhood organizations are rapidly becoming a major element in local decision making. They reflect a growing commitment to improving the quality of life for present residents, which hopefully will stem the flight of families to the suburbs.

While the overall impact of the demands made by neighborhood organizations has been positive, opportunity for abuse of newfound influence is always present. Because neighbors acting together must be unofficial and informal, self-seeking individuals can falsely claim to be spokesman for established groups. Special interest groups are occasionally established to pursue a specific issue under the guise of a "neighborhood association" title, believing, probably correctly, that such a label increases credability. Yet San Francisco's elected and appointed officials, using their considerable experience, are quick to recognize legitimate neighborhood spokesmen."

SPUR News Report No. 112
August 1975

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

Studio Bernard Poinssot
17 Alta St. Ex 2-0227

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COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION MEETINGS TO BE OPENED TO ALL MEMBERS

The following Standing Committees of the THD were established by the Board of Directors at its July meeting. Chairmen will hold open meetings to organize volunteers, examine issues and select members.

Environment	
Betty Rader	392-0227
Membership	
David Broadbear	445-7038
Parks, Trees & Open Space	
Nora Quinn	397-0582
Planning, Zoning & Development	
Roger Boyer	398-3870
Ann Zaccaria	956-0784
Semaphore	
Bob Tibbits	986-7227
Social & Arrangements	
John Brodman	989-4130
Traffic, Parking & Transportation	
John Holmes	421-0274
Waterfront	
Bob Katz	986-1890

Anyone interested should contact the Chairmen for the scheduled time and location. Meetings are to be held during September. Even if you are not sure which committee you would like to work on, call and discuss it with the chairpersons.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

September 4th 8:00 PM

St. Francis of Assisi
Catholic Church
610 Vallejo Street

Speaker:

Rubin Glickman - representing *Homeowners for Fair Property Taxes*
will discuss filing legal appeals on recent assessment increases

Speaker:

Michelle Anderson - Coordinator *Neighborhood Bicentennial Celebrations*
will talk on $600,000 awards for neighborhood projects

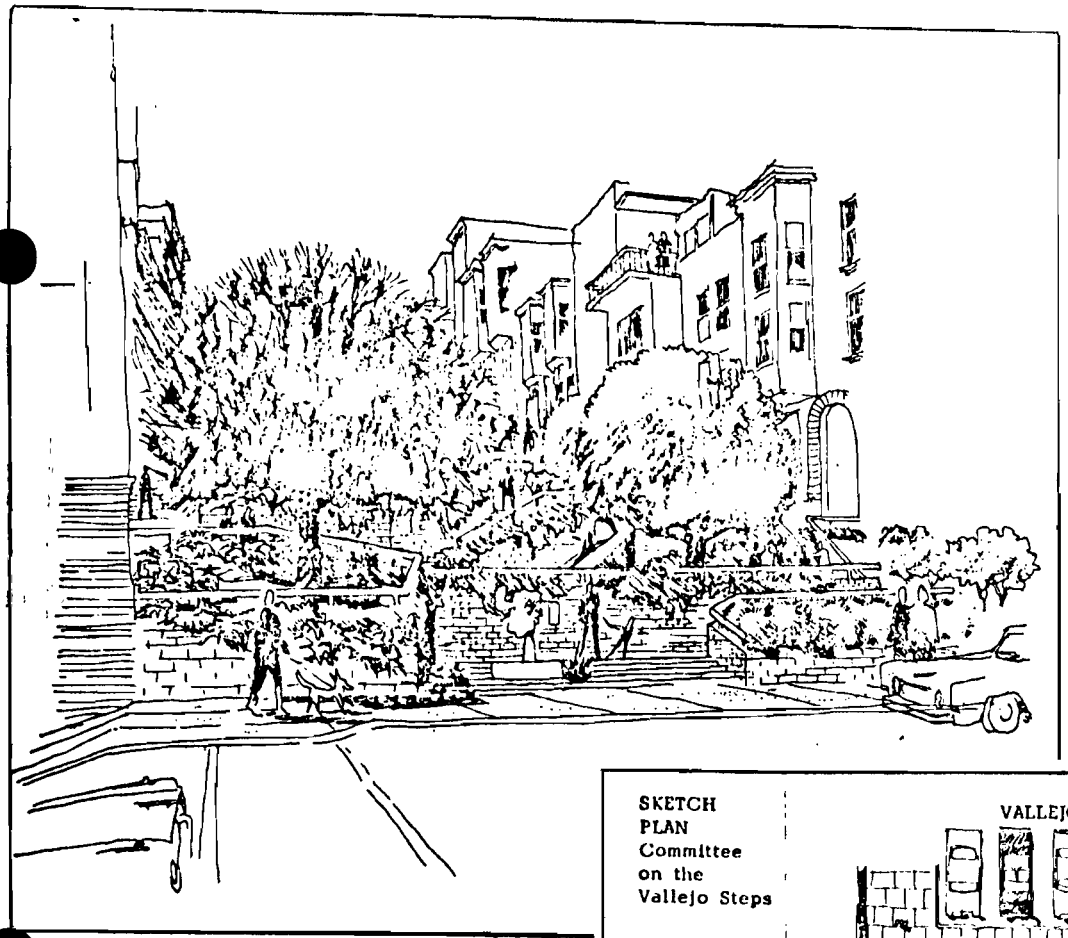
Speaker:

George Homsey, A.I.A. of *Esherick, Homsey, Dodge & Davis*
will present preliminary design plans for new Garfield School

NORTH BEACH BRANCH OF PUBLIC LIBRARY

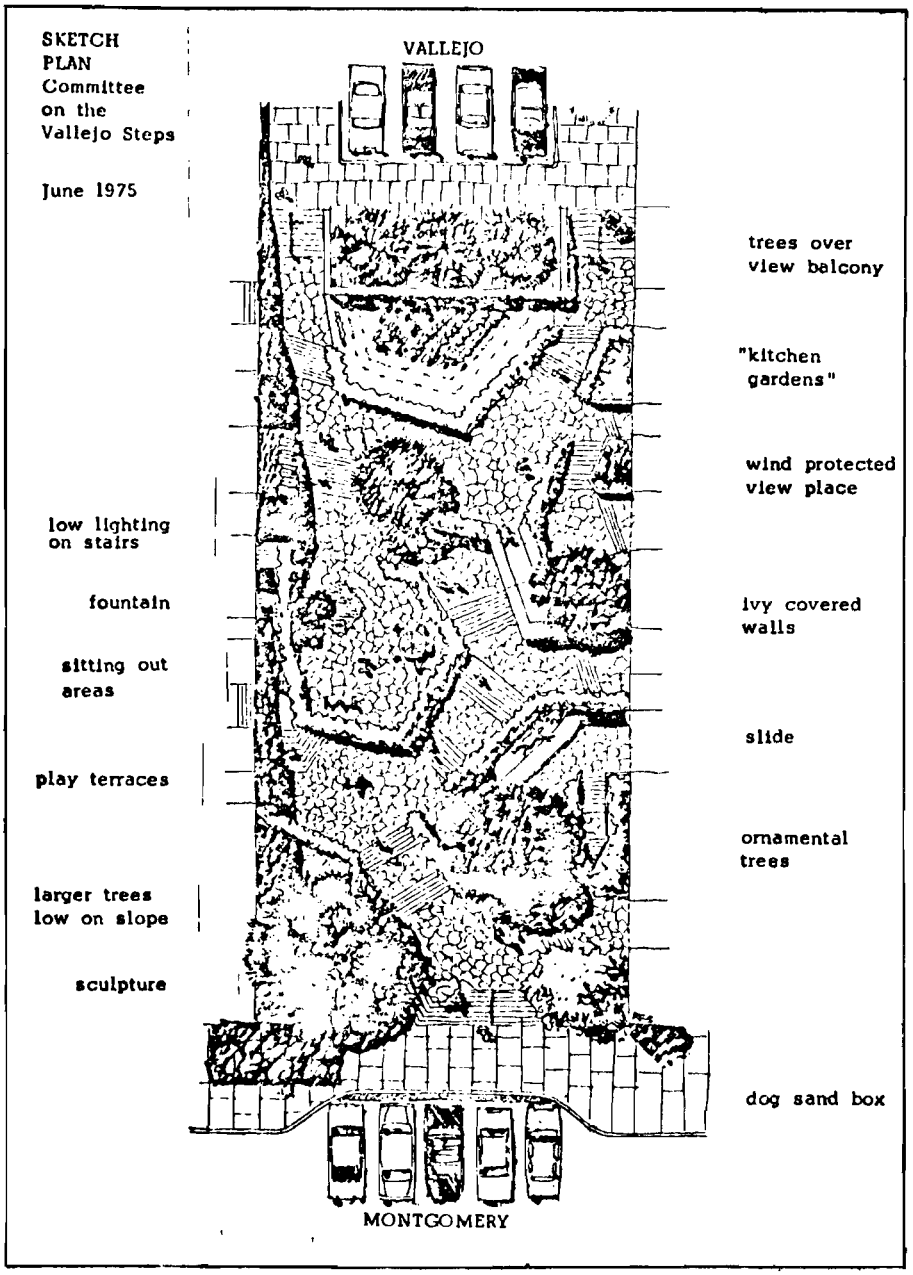
Frederick M. Wirt's "Power in the City": decision making in San Francisco"; Hailey's "Money-changers"; Noel Mostert's "Super-ship", a troubling look at the vast tankers which transport oil; local author Ella Leffland's "Love out of Season" -- these are some of the best selling books in our area which you may have been intending to read.

You can find them at the North Beach Branch of your San Francisco Public Library along with other popular titles and more established works, magazines, phonograph records; and foreign language fiction, drama and poetry. There is a reference collection and a pamphlet file too. Visit soon and check out the children's services too. If you have pre-school children, make a date for Thursdays at 10:30 for our children's librarian pre-school story hour.



THE SAVOY TIVOLI
NORTH BEACH
1434-1436 UPPER GRANT AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO
362-7023

Design Sketch for rebuilding Vallejo Street between Kearny & Montgomery Streets prepared by Rod Freebairn-Smith, Chairman of the 15-member THD Special Committee on Vallejo Steps. Nearly a dozen meetings, including planning sessions with city officials, and a survey of 50 residents in the area have gone into preparation of this plan. Funding in the amount of $107,400 will be provided by Federal Urban Beautification Grants and State Gasoline Taxes.



PRELIMINARY PLANS UNDERWAY FOR REBUILDING GARFIELD SCHOOL

Come the opening of City schools in the fall of 1977, Telegraph Hill children will be going to a stunning, new Garfield School. Designed by Esherick, Homsey, Dodge & Davis, 120 Green Street, a three level building that steps gently down the hill below Coit Tower has been proposed. It is hoped the present archway can be retained as the anchor for a series of entrances at various levels that will retain much of the present texture of the old building, including a tiled roof.

Schematics have been completed following an exhaustive series of

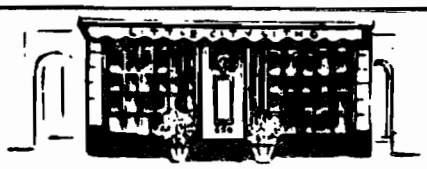
(continued next page)

(GARFIELD SCHOOL Continued)

meetings involving teachers, parents, and neighborhood representatives. The project is just entering the design development stage with demolition of the old school due later this year and construction scheduled to begin in 1976. A community meeting will be arranged to allow for review of the school which is certain to be an exciting architectural addition to the hill, an innovative educational tool, and a valuable community asset.

The principal architect, George Homsey, will be on hand at the September 4, 1975 General Membership Meeting to present drawings and floor plans, and discuss the project.

650 Vallejo Street
San Francisco
California 94133
Phone: DOuglas 2-3324



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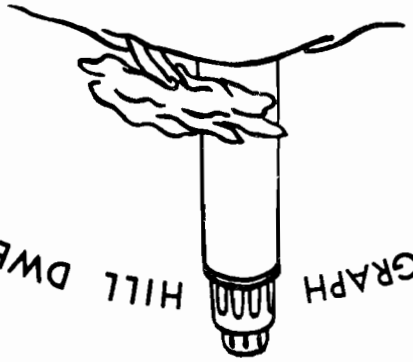

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